

Regional flag day today

Three charities have been issued Public Subscription Permits to hold flag sales from 7am to 12.30pm today (December 29). They are, on Hong Kong Island, The Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club; in Kowloon, Suicide Prevention Services Limited; and in the New Territories, Tseung Kwan O Sion Church Limited, a spokesman for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) said.

Arrangements have been made with the charities to help people distinguish between the three flag-selling activities.

Information on the three flag-selling organisations on December 29 is as follows:

Region	Name of organisation	Colour of collection bag	Colour of flag
Hong Kong Island	The Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club	Red	Light Yellow
Kowloon	Suicide Prevention Services Limited	Red	Beige
New Territories	Tseung Kwan O Sion Church Limited	Red	White

Details of the charitable fund-raising activities, including any updated information, covered by the issued Public Subscription Permits have been published on the GovHK website (www.gov.hk/en/theme/fundraising/search). Permits for flag days containing information on contact methods of the flag-selling organisations and the approved flag-selling activities have also been uploaded to the SWD's website (www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_controlofc/sub_flagdays) for reference. For enquiries, please call the SWD's hotline at 2343 2255, or the designated hotline of the 1823 Call Centre at 3142 2678.

In the case of suspected fraudulent flag day activities, people should not make any donation and should immediately report the matter to the Police, the spokesman added.

Government enforces "restriction-

testing declaration" and compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Discovery Bay (with photo)

â€‹The Government yesterday (December 28) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" effective from 7pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Discovery Bay (i.e. Twilight Court, Peninsula Village, 2 Caperidge Drive, Discovery Bay, Lantau Island) were required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. In addition, the Government had issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday to any person who had been present at the building for more than two hours from December 6 to December 28, 2021, to undergo compulsory testing on or before December 30, 2021 even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect. The Government finished the compulsory testing exercise at around 6am today (December 29) and is now carrying out enforcement actions in the "restricted area" to verify that all people in the "restricted area" have undergone compulsory testing. The Government will further announce the revocation time of the declaration.

Starting from around 6am today, persons in the "restricted area" in Discovery Bay who have undergone testing and are able to present SMS notifications with negative test results or wear wristbands as proof of having undergone testing may leave the "restricted area" through the designated exit after providing personal information to a prescribed officer.

The Government set up temporary specimen collection stations in the "restricted area" yesterday and requested persons subject to compulsory testing to collect combined nasal and throat swab samples at the stations to undergo a COVID-19 virus test before 1am today. As at 1am today, around 210 residents had undergone testing. No confirmed cases were found.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit around 140 households, among which around 30 households did not answer the door. Those may include some households undergoing quarantine or isolation. Some units are possibly vacant as well. The Government does not have detailed information in this respect and will take measures to follow up.

The Government also understands that some residents already underwent testing at the mobile specimen collection stations set up in the district or by other means. Therefore, persons in the "restricted area" who have

undergone testing from December 26 to December 28, 2021, and are able to provide the SMS notification through mobile phone or related certification containing the test results, are not required to take the test again.

The Government reiterates that enforcement actions will be taken seriously. Any person who fails to present an SMS notification with a test result or wear a wristband as proof of having undergone testing breaches the compulsory testing notice and may be liable to a fine of \$5,000. The person will also be issued with a compulsory testing order, requiring him/her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.



[Government gazettes compulsory testing notice](#)

The Government exercises the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and publishes in the Gazette a compulsory testing notice, which requires any person who had been present at 52 specified premises during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

In view of four preliminary positive or confirmed imported cases who had stayed in Hong Kong during the incubation period, 51 specified premises visited by the cases are included in the compulsory testing notice. The Government strongly reminds members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo the multiple tests on time as required. The above compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well. They are advised to closely monitor their health conditions. They should seek medical attention and undergo testing even if they have only mild symptoms.

Furthermore, since there was an outbreak of upper respiratory tract infection and/or influenza-like illness in one school, and the symptoms of the diseases concerned are similar to those of COVID-19, for prudence's sake, the relevant school is covered in the compulsory testing notice. Persons who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.

Persons subject to compulsory testing in accordance with a compulsory testing notice must go to any of the mobile specimen collection stations, community testing centres (CTCs) or recognised local medical testing institutions to undergo professional swab sampling in fulfilling the requirements for compulsory testing. Young children may continue to undergo the test using a stool specimen.

If Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 or above, the Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or the post-super typhoon "extreme conditions" announcement by the Government is in force at any time during the period for undergoing the compulsory testing, the period for undergoing the compulsory testing will be further extended for one day.

The Comirnaty and CoronaVac vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from COVID-19. They can provide protection to those vaccinated to prevent serious complications and even death after infection. The Government appeals to persons who are not yet vaccinated, especially senior citizens, chronic patients and other immunocompromised persons who face a higher chance of death after COVID-19 infection, to get vaccinated as soon as possible for better self-protection before the fifth wave strikes in Hong Kong.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are in Annex 1.

Subsequent to the announcement by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) on the updated quarantine arrangements of local COVID-19 cases with a mutant strain, persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases will be subject to compulsory testing on specified dates in accordance with the announcement by the Department of Health (DH). They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day (see the details of the buildings and dates of testing at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf). For prudence's sake, the above compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well.

In accordance with the compulsory testing notice issued earlier, all household members of close contacts are required to undergo compulsory testing. Any person who had lived with a person placed under quarantine pursuant to section 22 of the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation (Cap. 599A) (person under quarantine) in the same residential unit on the date of commencement of quarantine or during the 14 days before that day, and who becomes aware of the quarantine of the person under quarantine when the relevant quarantine has not yet been completed, has to undergo testing within two days of him or her becoming aware that the person under quarantine has been placed under quarantine and report to the Government the result of the

test by phone (6275 6901), fax (2530 5872) or email (ct@csb.gov.hk) within three days of undergoing the test. For prudence's sake, the above compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well.

CTCs provide testing services for the public, including free service for persons subject to compulsory testing. Booking and walk-in services are available. Members of the public only need to provide simple personal information on the 24-hour booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en). The system shows the booking status of the centres for the coming two weeks to facilitate the public's planning and selection of a suitable testing centre and a time slot for testing. The testing centres will accord priority to serve individuals with advance bookings. As of 6pm on December 28, there were around 33 000 booking places available for today (December 29) at the CTCs, and around 93 per cent availability for booking places for the coming seven days. Members of the public may call the testing centres for enquiries on the availability of bookings or walk-in quotas before visiting the centres.

The Government will set up or re-open mobile specimen collection stations at the following locations today for residents and workers subject to compulsory testing:

- Tower 6 of The Belcher's, Pok Fu Lam Road
- Tower 10 of Park Avenue in Tai Kok Tsui
- Luen Wo Hui Community Hall in Fanling
- open area next to Discovery Bay Fire Station
- open area outside Twilight Court, Peninsula Village in Discovery Bay

Outdoor mobile specimen collection stations will be closed if Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 or the Red Rainstorm Warning Signal is in force while all mobile specimen collection stations together with all CTCs will be closed when Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or higher or the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal is in force.

Free testing service will be provided to persons subject to compulsory testing at CTCs and mobile specimen collection stations located at 40 places in various districts today. The testing capacity should be sufficient to meet the demand. Persons subject to compulsory testing and those with the "LeaveHomeSafe" COVID-19 exposure notification or SMS notification from the CHP reminding them to undergo testing as soon as possible may receive free testing at CTCs or mobile specimen collection stations (if the service scope is applicable). The opening dates and operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations are stated in Annex 2.

Persons subject to compulsory testing may choose to undergo testing via the following routes:

1. To visit any of the mobile specimen collection stations (see the list and target groups (if applicable) at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html) for testing;
2. To attend any of the CTCs (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en);

3. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the DH and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories_RTPCR.pdf), and the relevant sample must be taken through combined nasal and throat swabs; or
4. To use a specimen bottle distributed to the relevant specified premises by the CHP (if applicable), and return the specimen bottle with the stool sample collected as per relevant guidelines.

If a person subject to compulsory testing obtains a medical certificate issued by a registered medical practitioner, proving that he or she is unfit to undergo testing using a sample taken through combined nasal and throat swabs because of health reasons, then he or she may choose to undergo testing via the following routes by providing a deep throat saliva sample:

1. To obtain a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from any of the 120 post offices, vending machines set up at 20 MTR stations or 47 designated general out-patient clinics (GOPCs) of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to one of the designated specimen collection points (see the distribution points and times, and the specimen collection points and times, at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html);
2. To undergo testing at any of the GOPCs of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority; or
3. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the DH and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau cautioned that testing received at the Accident and Emergency Departments of the Hospital Authority or during hospital stays, or testing provided by private laboratories which cannot issue SMS notifications in respect of test results, does not comply with the requirements of the aforementioned compulsory testing notice.

"If persons subject to compulsory testing have symptoms, they should seek medical attention immediately and undergo testing as instructed by a medical professional. They should not attend the mobile specimen collection stations or the CTCs."

Persons subject to compulsory testing must keep the SMS notifications containing the result of the test and the relevant medical certificate (if applicable) for checking by a law enforcement officer when the officer requires the persons to provide information about their undergoing the specified test.

Furthermore, persons subject to testing under the compulsory testing notices should, as far as reasonably practicable, take appropriate personal disease prevention measures including wearing a mask and maintaining hand hygiene, and, unless for the purpose of undergoing the specified test, stay at their place of residence and avoid going out until the test result is ascertained as far as possible.

Any enquiries on compulsory testing arrangements may be addressed to the

hotline at 6275 6901, which operates daily from 9am to 6pm. If persons subject to compulsory testing plan to conduct testing at any of the CTCs, they can check the centre's appointment status in advance. The hotlines of the CTCs are available at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/info.

The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to the relevant premises, and seriously verify whether they had complied with the testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Relevant officers of different government departments are empowered to perform certain functions under the relevant Regulations under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599), including requesting individuals to provide information and assistance when necessary. Any person who fails to comply with the relevant request commits an offence and would be liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000). Collection and use of any personal data for conducting COVID-19 tests must meet the requirements under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486). Government departments or testing service providers which handle the relevant information may provide the data to the DH or other relevant departments for anti-epidemic purposes as necessary. The workflow does not involve the provision of any personal data to organisations or persons outside Hong Kong.

The spokesman said, "The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health conditions, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or contacted confirmed cases), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons."

SWD's response to media enquiries on suspected child abuse case

In response to media enquiries about a suspected child case, a spokesman for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) gave the following response today (December 28):

The SWD has all along attached great importance to the well-being of children and firmly believes that every child has a right to protection against harm and abuse. The SWD has taken a series of actions in relation to the incident.

The SWD today met with the chairman and some members of the executive committee as well as the management of the organisation that operates the service unit concerned. The department expressed its deep concern about the incident and received a briefing by the organisation on its handling of the incident. The organisation reported that more staff members might have been involved in the child abuse incident and that they have already been suspended from duty. The SWD has requested the organisation to take corresponding measures to enhance the supervision of front-line staff and ensure that the children at the centre are provided with proper care. The organisation is also required to report the follow-up actions taken to the SWD as soon as possible.

At the meeting, the organisation also introduced the immediate measures that they have taken. A taskforce will be established as soon as possible so that thorough investigation can be conducted and a review report with improvement plans, including enhanced risk management, staff supervision and monitoring, will be submitted. The SWD has urged the organisation to fully co-operate with police investigations, submit the review report in a timely manner and implement the necessary improvement measures, including a review of its internal management mechanism and continuous supervision of the conduct of staff members, so as to avoid similar incidents from recurring in the future.

In addition, the SWD yesterday (December 27) sent an inter-disciplinary team, comprising more than 20 clinical psychologists, nurses, social workers, etc, to the child care centre concerned to conduct investigations and inspect the operation of the centre and its work records. The team also conducted observations on each of the 70 children in the centre in regard to their behaviours, health and emotional status. Initial observations suggested that the children were in stable condition. The SWD will continue to closely monitor the situation of the centre to ensure that its operation is in compliance with service standard and the need to protect children. The SWD yesterday also contacted the parents of the children who were on home leave to ensure their children were in good condition.

The SWD has all along conducted surprise inspections at the centre concerned, including daytime and night-time inspections, to ensure that the centre fulfils the licensing requirements. The SWD has issued warning letters to the operator of the centre and will continue to follow up on the incident to ensure the children at the centre are provided with proper care.

All child care centres must be registered in compliance with the requirements under the Child Care Services Ordinance (Cap 243) and the Child Care Services Regulations (Cap 243A). Under the laws, registered child care staff must be employed in the child care centres. The Director of Social Welfare may remove the name of any person from the register of Child Care Workers if he considers he/she is no longer suitable to take up child care work. Subject to the investigation results on different fronts, the SWD may take actions according to relevant regulations.

Government reminds public to utilise self-paid services at community testing centres for cross-boundary or cross-border travel

A Government spokesman said today (December 28) that apart from providing free testing services to those who are subject to compulsory testing and targeted groups which are required to undergo testing, the 19 community testing centres (CTCs) also have sufficient capacity to serve self-paid users. The public may make booking with any CTC that suits their needs to undergo self-paid test for general community or other private uses such as cross-boundary and cross-border travel (including the future application for Hong Kong Health Code).

The CTCs provide self-paid specimen collection services through combined nasal and throat swabs and COVID-19 reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) testing method. The charge of this self-paid service is capped at \$240. The contractor will issue within 24 hours the nucleic acid test report, which is also suitable for applying for the Hong Kong Health Code. The public are reminded that the time for contractors to issue the test reports may vary with regard to the time slots in which the specimens were collected. They may choose and make booking with the appropriate CTC for self-paid testing based on their own needs.

The Food and Health Bureau has all along been in close contact with the contractors so as to get well prepared for implementing the Hong Kong Health Code. At present, the 19 CTCs provide close to 40 000 online booking places per day. Members of the public only need to provide simple personal information (including name, valid identification document number and contact phone number that can receive SMS) in the 24-hour booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk) for selection of testing location and time slot.

"Those who need the test report for travel, including the future application for Hong Kong Health Code, have to fill in relevant travel information such as the Hong Kong and Macao Residents Entry and Exit Permit (Home Return Permit) or other travel documents when making an online booking. Moreover, they have to bring along original documents that are required for entry to the destination and the booking confirmation SMS to the CTC for registration so that the relevant identity number can be quoted on the test report," the spokesman reminded.

"Free test users will receive only SMS testing results but not any testing report or proof. The SMS cannot be used for cross-boundary or cross-border travel, including the application for the Hong Kong Health Code which

allows exemption of quarantine for entry to the Mainland. Those who wish to undergo COVID-19 test to get the testing report for relevant purposes shall use the self-paid testing service."

The booking system displays the booking status of each centre for the next two weeks, making it convenient for people to plan and choose the suitable location and time slot for testing. The CTCs will accord priority to provide service for individuals with advance booking. Before going to the CTC, one may give a call to ascertain the availability of booking and walk-in quotas. To shorten the onsite waiting time, citizens should make advance online booking as far as possible and input all required information beforehand.

The CTCs open daily from 8am to 1.30pm and from 2.30pm to 8pm. Deep cleaning and disinfection is conducted during closure of the CTCs around noon and at night. For details of the locations, respective contractors and enquiry hotlines of the CTCs in service, please refer to www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/info. Contactless payment means are provided by contractors as a measure to reduce the risk of virus spreading out. The Government encourages self-paid users to avoid using cash for payment.

The CTCs serve all asymptomatic individuals holding valid Hong Kong identity cards, birth certificates or other valid identity documents (including Hong Kong residents and non-Hong Kong residents). Symptomatic persons shall seek medical attention immediately and should not attend the CTCs. Self-paid users with a negative result will receive the test report for a COVID-19 nucleic acid test from contractors within 24 hours from the test. Those who tested positive will receive calls from the Department of Health (DH) to arrange for isolation and treatment in public hospitals.

All contractors of the CTC are laboratories on the list of "Local COVID-19 RT-PCR testing institutions recognised by the Hong Kong SAR Government" maintained by the DH. (Please refer to www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories RTPCR.pdf for the List). Members of the public may self-arrange testing at these private laboratories to serve their general community or other private purposes. The Government will closely monitor the usage of the testing services and timely adjust the arrangements.